



REVITALIZATION AND REDEVELOPMENT AD- HOC COMMITTEE

The meeting of the Miami Springs Revitalization and Redevelopment Ad-Hoc Committee was held on Monday, February 20, 2012 in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:13 p.m.

Present were: Chairman Laz Martinez
Vice Chairman Todd Stiff
Arturo Rabade

Absent: Joe Valencia

Also Present: Acting Board Secretary Elora R. Sakal

Before the meeting began, Chairman Laz Martinez asked for a moment of silence for Wade Smith.

3. Approval of Minutes: September 19, 2011

Vice Chair Stiff moved to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2011 meeting as written. Committee member Rabade seconded the motion, which carried 3-0 on voice vote.

4. Discussion Regarding the Findings of the City's Strategic Plan

Chairman Laz Martinez wished that the City Planner could have been present at this meeting to provide some updates. He explained that Council approved the signage and lighting recommendation that was discussed at the last joint meeting with the Architectural Review Board. He asked the committee members if they were aware of that approval.

Committee member Rabade stated that he was not aware of the approval and Committee member Stiff said that he was aware of the approval and attended the workshop meeting and saw Calvin Giordano make the presentation again.

To answer Chairman Martinez's question, Committee member Stiff commented that the presentation that Calvin Giordano gave to Council at the workshop meeting was pretty much the same as the presentation they gave at the joint meeting with the Architectural Review Board.

Chairman Martinez thanked City Manager Ron Gorland for taking the time to meet with him to discuss how they were going to go forward in revitalization and redevelopment. He feels that City Manager Gorland is taking a more active role than the prior Manager and he is encouraged by the fact that the City Manager is holding monthly meetings with the consultants and the City Planner.

Committee member Rabade asked if anyone knew at what point City Manager Gorland and the consultants are at in their discussions on the strategic planning or if there is a set schedule.

Chairman Martinez replied that to his knowledge there is no set schedule and that is why he was hoping that City Planner Holland would have been here tonight so that he could shed some light on any of the steps that have been made towards the process.

Chairman Martinez said that he attended both planning meetings that were held for residents and business owners. He mentioned that the City website has the breakdown of the strategic plan and he asked if the committee members had looked at it.

Committee member Rabade responded that he had not looked at the strategic plan on the website.

Committee member Stiff said that he did not look at the strategic plan and said that he figured if Council was going to do anything with the strategic plan then it would have been publicized.

Chairman Martinez stated that the strategic plan was publicized on the website and Committee member Stiff clarified that posting something on the website is different than publicizing it.

Chairman Martinez noted that the basic goal is to strengthen and diversify the tax base and the objective is to raise the commercial tax revenue from 20% to 25% by October of 2016. In reviewing it, he believes it is a step in the right direction. He stated that there was a lot of general terminology and though it is a nice base to start with, it is lacking in a lot of clear details on what the vision is.

Committee member Rabade commented that the strategic plan says a lot of the same things that have been said before.

Chairman Martinez felt that more was going to come out of this plan. A lot of the comments that were made in the meeting were very specific in details and discussions included reviving the downtown area and the fact that people wanted to see that area revived with thriving businesses.

Committee member Rabade asked Chairman Martinez if the meeting was a brainstorming session of some sort and Chairman Martinez said that there was brainstorming because everyone put ideas on a board and then they voted on the ideas.

Committee member Rabade asked if Chairman Martinez remembered what the top three ideas were and if there were ideas that have already been considered.

Chairman Martinez replied that none of the topics were earth shaking and nothing came up that was not already discussed previously. He stated that he wants to encourage Council to do whatever they have to do to “get the meat on the bones” and he is not sure how that is going to happen. He asked if the committee members knew of anything being finalized regarding the Abraham Tract.

Committee member Stiff responded that he does not know of anything regarding the Abraham Tract.

Committee member Rabade remembered someone mentioning that Anthony Abraham was the owner of the largest number of parcels and if anything would ever get done in that area of any consequence, the City would have to deal with Anthony Abraham’s estate.

Chairman Martinez said that where it stands right now is that the consultants are trying to formulate guidelines for the adult entertainment areas and they were lacking in the legalese that is required to be included in the plan in order to allow for that sort of use.

Committee member Rabade asked if any entities, whether in that industry or other industries, have shown any interest in the Abraham Tract.

Chairman Martinez replied that the last he heard was that there was an interest from the Wyndham Hotel but the developer chose to move on to another area.

Committee member Rabade noted that that type of industry would be quite lucrative for Miami Springs and for the hotel, considering the proximity to the airport and other transportation venues that Miami Springs has. He said that the Abraham Tract is prime property and gets better as the days go by and everything around it is growing.

Chairman Martinez said that part of the strategic plan calls for a marketing plan. He commented that the Beacon Council only refers corporations to existing structures.

Discussion ensued regarding the Pilot House and Chairman Martinez expressed his concern regarding the proposed plans for NW 36th Street.

Committee member Rabade feels that a lot of ideas are being expressed and meetings are being held but nothing is actually happening.

Discussion ensued regarding the idea that Committee member Stiff previously had on the subject of how to improve the area around the circle and how it was never taken into consideration.

Committee member Rabade expressed his concern with the need to discuss things out in the open and create ideas.

Chairman Martinez found it a little frustrating that the committee moved forward with ideas and then unfortunately they fell by the wayside. The committee is limited to only making recommendations and his fear is that the committee would come up with an idea and then the consultants would create another idea for the same topic and the committee's idea would be ignored.

Committee member Rabade reiterated his concern for not moving forward with any ideas.

Chairman Martinez said that if Council has hired and paid consultants to provide ideas, which they have, and the ideas are just sitting there, the Revitalization and Redevelopment Committee would not assume that Council is going to tell the consultants to incorporate his ideas into the overall plan because Committee member Stiff comes up with a great idea for the circle.

Chairman Martinez wants to bring back Committee member Stiff's ideas regarding the circle and he wants to make sure that the committee is having meaningful conversations and making their time worthwhile. He feels that it is the City Planner and Administration that need to move forward with designs to market.

Discussion ensued regarding McDonalds project that had come into place and the obstacles it faced to revitalize its site.

Chairman Martinez commented that if Council and the Administration had taken some of the ideas that the Revitalization and Redevelopment Committee had given them such as to debug the development guidelines that were put forth by Calvin Giordano, then maybe there would not have been as many issues with McDonalds or the Pilot House.

Chairman Martinez said that he is open to finding out what the committee can do differently. He wants to figure out a way that the committee can be more effective in getting things done because it has not worked out that way.

Committee member Rabade asked if Council mentioned any criteria that they are looking for and Chairman Martinez replied that it was what he read to the members earlier.

Chairman Martinez stated that he talks to a lot of residents who are aware that he is on this committee and they ask him what the Committee has accomplished. He noted that the only thing that the committee accomplished was to pass the NW 36th Street rezoning proposal that happened under the last Administration. He mentioned that the only thing that he can see that could possibly be achieved financially, as well as time wise, is signage and lighting.

Committee member Rabade said that signage and lighting was just approved and Committee member Stiff clarified that Council gave the consultants direction to establish the guidelines so that the City could get a price to do essentially a mock up of a few lights and a few signs where Deer Run meets with Curtiss Parkway.

Chairman Martinez explained that the consultants were given guidelines and the work has not been put out to bid, and no funds have been set aside.

Committee member Stiff stated that Council has not figured out how to pay for the work because they do not know how much it is going to cost so that is why they paid and directed the consultants to come up with a plan to put out for bid to establish an idea of how much it might cost to do something in that area specifically.

Committee member Stiff noted that he was at the workshop meeting when Calvin Giordano gave their presentation to Council and they left an image on the projector of what Westward Drive could look like some day. It was a beautiful rendering with shrubbery on the streets and it looked very nice but there were no curb cuts for Americans with Disabilities (ADA) traffic.

To answer Committee member Rabade's question, Committee member Stiff clarified that it was a workshop meeting so Council could not vote on anything. He said that in reading the Gazette, at the next Council Meeting they passed along that directive for the Manager to work with the consultant and develop a plan that they could get a price for in order for Council to see what they would be looking at.

Chairman Martinez commented that although he is not an expert in the area, a lot of the funds that would be required for that could be obtained from Citizen's Independent Transportation Trust (CITT) funds. He hopes that when Council comes up for re-election, that they have more than one street corner with signage and lighting to show for what they have been able to do for the residents in terms of increasing the tax revenue.

Committee member Rabade asked if anyone has looked at the City of Doral. He said that they had gone through a complete renovation with their signage and lighting in the entire City.

Chairman Martinez reminded Committee member Rabade that it would still have to go out for bid and Committee member Rabade clarified that he is asking if the Administration had asked the City of Doral how much they spent on the similar project that Miami Springs is now in the process of contemplating as an idea of what to expect.

Committee member Stiff said that he believes that it would be too complicated because Miami Springs and the City of Doral are incredibly different. They are close in proximity but beyond that are not close at all. He noted that Doral is essentially a modern master planned City and all of the residential developments were residential developments as opposed to Miami Springs which was essentially a bunch of lots that were divided and put up for sale with a few houses built by an early developing pioneer.

Committee member Stiff stated that Doral probably got funding from many different places and it would be a waste of time.

Committee member Rabade commented that everything has been time consuming and he has not seen any of the benefits that he thought he would have been able to see.

Committee member Stiff reminded the members that this committee was formed on a 3-2 vote by Council and the only position that has changed on Council since their existence has been the Mayor. He is concerned if there is a will from Council to want to keep this committee going.

Discussion ensued regarding the resignation of the Architectural Review Board members and whether they believe that board will remain in the code or not.

Committee member Stiff recommended that the next agenda item should be to get to know the City Planner. He said that in a September meeting, the City Planner called the 36th Street a disaster. It would not be a bad idea to get a status update from the City Planner as to where the code for 36th Street sits. He mentioned that hopefully the empty seat on the Revitalization and Redevelopment Committee will be filled by the next meeting and if it is not then the members will know where they stand.

Chairman Martinez suggested expanding the next agenda to include the consultants as well as the City Planner to give an update on where they are with everything in general.

Committee member Stiff explained that he does not agree with that suggestion because the consultants have to be compensated to come to a meeting and he does not believe City funds should to be spent to have a consultant present when they can get the information they need from the City Planner.

Chairman Martinez feels that if the consultants are not present at the next committee meeting, things will take a lot longer than they already have.

Chairman Martinez noted that the absences of Committee member Valencia seemed to be consistent and asked the acting Board Secretary if he could be provided with the attendance count of all committee members.

Committee member Stiff made a motion that the Revitalization and Redevelopment Committee requests that the City have the City Planner attend the next meeting on March 19, 2012 to brief the members of where he thinks the new code for 36th Street stands as well as inform the members as to any variances that have been applied for and granted in that District. Committee member Rabade seconded the motion which was carried unanimously by voice vote.

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5. Adjourn

There was no further discussion and the meeting was duly adjourned at 8:28 p.m.



Elora R. Sakal
Board Secretary

Approved as written on 03/19/2012

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